

Parsons Nursery, Original Wash House  
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles  
southeast of Parsons  
Parsons Vicinity  
Tucker County  
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-B

HABS  
WVA  
47-PARSON,  
13-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HAB  
WVA  
47-PARS.V,  
18-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

HABS No. WV-237-B

PARSONS NURSERY, Original Wash House

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles  
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West  
Virginia  
  
USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614315.4327682

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest  
Department of Agriculture  
Sycamore Street, Box 1548  
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Department of Natural Resources  
State of West Virginia

Last Use: Seed storage and stratification; vacant

Significance: The original wash house was built between  
1928-1930 with Forest Service general  
operating funds, as a part of the Parsons  
Nursery of the Monongahela National Forest.  
It was used by nursery employees for clean up  
after work until the completion of a larger  
wash house in 1939. For overview of Parsons  
Nursery, see HABS No. WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1928-30, a plan for the nursery site dated 1928 and a map survey for blister rust control that records the wash house in place in 1930 (WV-237-36, WV-237-38).
2. Architect: Architect is uncertain; landscape architect is unknown. George W. Root signed a sheet of details for this building, the office, workshop/warehouse, and pump house. Probably he, W. I. Doty and nursery manager D. A. Oliver designed this and the other buildings.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The original wash house was constructed for Monongahela National Forest by contract labor, according to John King.
5. Original Plans: None.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1952, the West Virginia Department of Conservation removed the center partition and north door and added a dividing partition. In the new back room, new inside walls were added that covered the windows, insulation was placed in the walls and a refrigerator door added. The new room was for seed stratification. To be demolished: 1990.

B. Historical Context:

The nursery office, original wash house (now seed stratification building), workshop/warehouse, a garage, water tank, pump house, and two equipment sheds (demolished) were constructed before 1930 (see WV-237-15). The original wash house was used for employee clean-up. The existing south door was used as entry for the men's wash room; a removed north door gave entry to the women's wash room. There was space for eating lunch and washing up. Employees did not wear clothing provided by the nursery, but did keep personal things at the wash house. Women wore pants to work. They were recognized in Parsons as employees of the nursery because they were seen wearing pants. The pants were purchased in the working men's department of Elkins' stores (Londa Bennett interview).

The original wash house was replaced by a bigger wash house in 1939. In 1952, the original building was converted for use as a cold room for seed stratification, under the

direction of Alvin Allison. Seed stratification took place in late winter, when seeds were mixed with sand and chilled in a dark environment to promote germination. Later, Allison learned that stratification could be done without sand. The seeds were placed between sheets of plastic screening, fastened together. The sandwich of screening and seeds was placed in moistened peat moss. The damp seeds were chilled, in the dark, for about a month before seeded in the nursery beds. Until the closing of the nursery in 1985, the building continued in this use.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The original wash house is one of a complex of Forest Service nursery buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, gable-roofed, shingle style. This building uses native materials available in Monongahela National Forest, such as chestnut sheathing boards and joists and it follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints used under sawn cedar shingle siding.
2. Condition of fabric: Flood damage and neglect have broken three front windows, otherwise the building is structurally sound but needs cleaning and shingle repair.

### B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, rectangular plan, this building is 18'-4" x 26'-4". It is three bays wide and two bays deep. It has an attic accessible by an open, stringer staircase.
2. Foundation: 8" poured concrete wall with concrete pad.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are wood shingled with random width cedar cut shingles applied in courses of 5-1/2" exposure. There are 7" plain yellow-painted corner boards. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 9'-6". The foundation-roof height at the peak is 9'-7".
4. Structural system: The wood frame walls are "2x4's", at 16" centers, covered in 1" thick diagonal sheathing boards--a typical West Virginia mountain framing system. The rafters are "2x6's" on 24" centers with a "1x6" ridge board. Attic joists are "2x6's" on 24" with a plywood floor over the south room, random width chestnut boards over the north room. Studs and rafters are pine; sheathing and joists are chestnut.

PARSONS NURSERY, Original Wash House  
HABS No. WV-237-B (page 4)

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: None.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: Front center doorway has plain, 4-1/2" board architrave with butt jointed head. Doorway height is 6'-8". The pine 6'-8" front door has five molded panels. Doorway trim and door are painted yellow.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Each elevation has two windows. Window frames are plain, 4-1/2" butt jointed jambs with heads that extend 1/4" beyond the jambs. There are metal drip caps that extend 1/2" beyond the heads, 1-1/2" window sills; and 3-1/2" under sill boards. All sash is 1/1, double hung. Windows to the west of the door, on the west outside ends and back west corner 3'-8-1/2" x 3'-0". The other west wall windows are 3'-6-1/2" x 2'-4". All these windows have translucent, pressed glass. East facing windows and the front, right window are 4'-5" x 2'-8" and have clear glass. Window sash and trim is painted yellow. There never were shutters.
8. Roof: The gable roof has asbestos shingles, a replacement of the original sawn cedar shingles. It has exposed rafter ends with a plain "1x8" fascia. On each gable end the "2x8" rake board is notched so that the "4x4" wall plate and "4x4" ridge piece extends just past the rake boards. The rake board ends are clipped to meet the fascia. The gable end overhang is 10", including the rake board; the eave overhang is 14-1/2", including the fascia. The wooden, rectangular gutters are missing (see WV-237-J-3). Roof trim and exposed rafters are painted yellow. There is a rectangular, pressed galvanized louver roof vent at each end, approximately 14" x 20".

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The rectangular building originally was two rooms with a partition in the center of the building. In 1952, alterations for a new function were completed. The interior room was divided, new interior walls added to the north room, and the new wall space filled with insulation. An original wash sink survives on the west wall of the south room.
2. Stairways: There is a new open stringer stair to the attic.

3. Flooring: The floor is unpainted concrete.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Both walls and ceiling of the front room have 3-1/2" tongue-and-groove beaded yellow pine boards covered with glossy shellac. The ceiling height is 8'-5". The north wall of the front room is plywood. The seed stratification room is plastered, walls and ceiling.
  5. Openings:
    - a. Doors: The front doorway has 5" pine jambs and 4-1/2" head, butt jointed. The 6'-8" pine door has six panels, raised and molded. The 3'-6" x 6'-8" refrigerator door to the seed stratification room is marked "Jamison, Hagerstown, MD, USA."
    - b. Windows: The front room windows have 4" jambs and heads, butt-jointed, a shaped, 1" sill, and 4" undersill board. The sash is pine. The windows in the seed stratification room are covered by the interior walls added in 1952.
  6. Decorative features and trim: In the front room, an original sink, 4' long, and pine cabinets, 32" high, is along the west wall.
  7. Hardware: The door hardware is plain iron with three ball-pinned hinges and a plain, brass-plated iron knob plate with bevelled edge. The refrigerator door has cast aluminum strap hinges 2' long and a bolting latch, both part of the "Jamison" door. Interior window hardware is brass-plated common swivel lock.
  8. Mechanical equipment: There is no indication of original heating system. Sink plumbing has been removed. Electrical cable is surface mounted to ceramic ceiling fixtures.
  9. Original furnishings: None.
- D. Site: The building faces southeast, 147°30' . It survives on its original site, together with most of the original nursery structures. A 3'-10" concrete walk extends 11' from the front door. In the rear, there is a 3' x 4' 9" concrete pad. A large poplar tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is 34' north of the building.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: one detail sheet, dated 1928,

located at Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV.

- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Al Allison, 7-23-1989, Charleston, WV, Parsons Nursery manager, 1952-57; Londa Bennett, 6-11-1989, Davis, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1930-1939; John King, 9-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-39; Dorsey Knight, 10-25-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951.
- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

Monongahela National Forest, Parsons Nursery, Building Location Plan, unpublished manuscript, 1928.

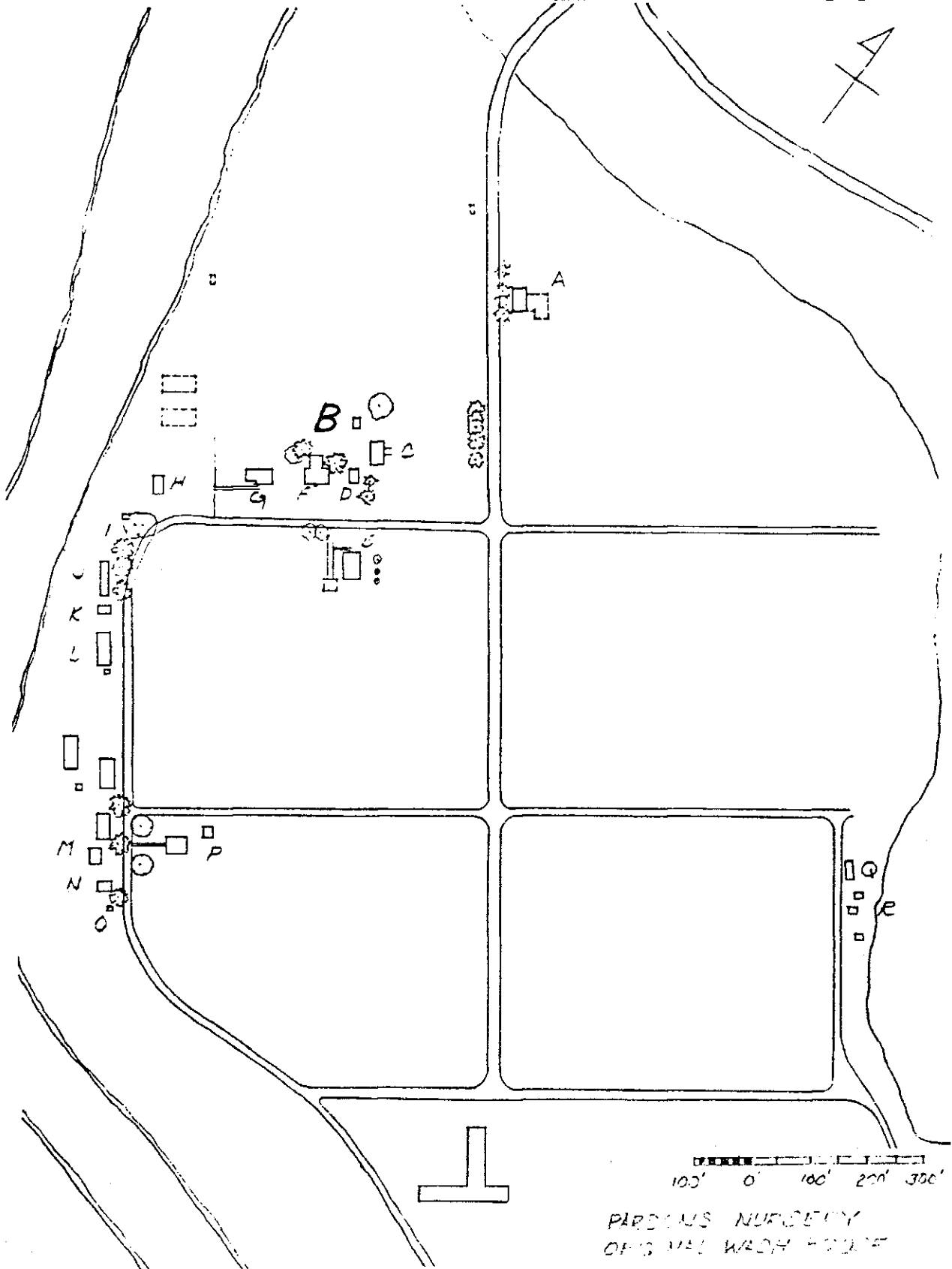
Pierce, R. G., Map Showing Blister Rust Control, Forest Service Nursery, Parsons, WV, unpublished manuscript, 1930.

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

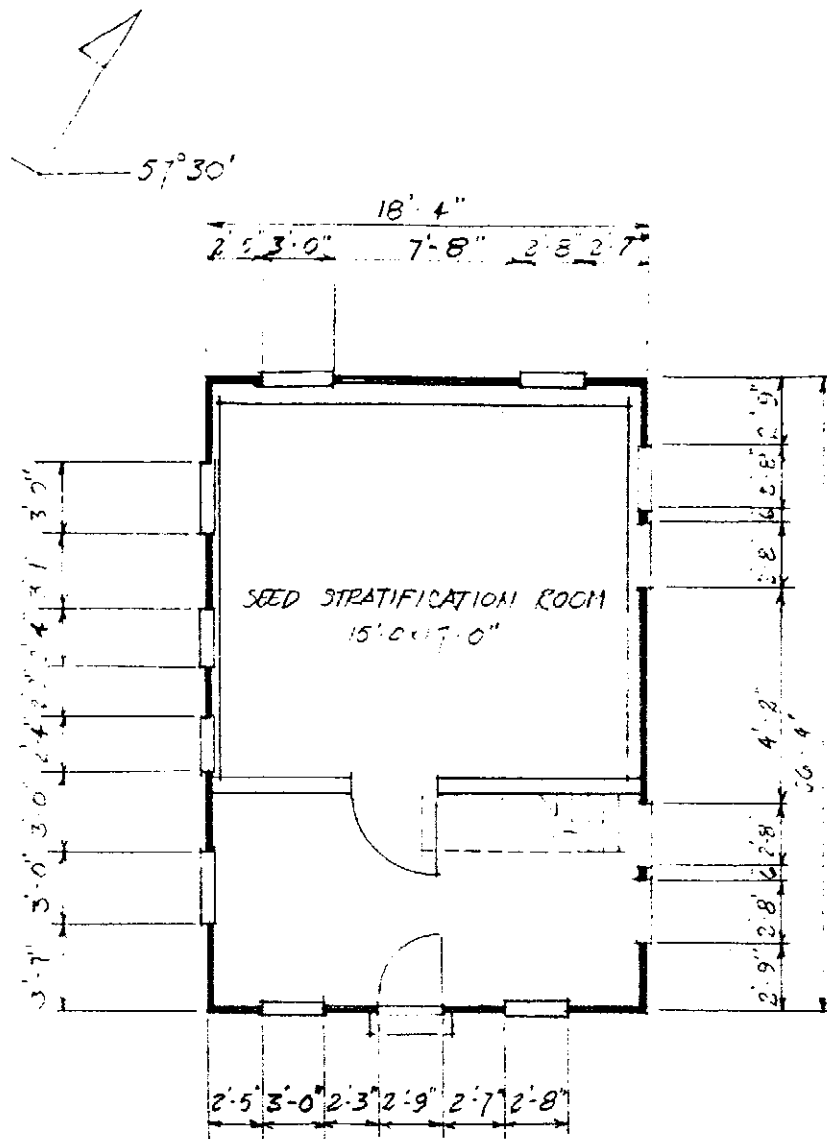
PARSONS NURSERY, Original Wash House  
HABS No. WV-237-B (page 7)



PARSONS NURSERY  
ORIGINAL WASH HOUSE



PARSONS NURSERY, Original Wash House  
HABS No. WV-237-B (page 8)



ORIGINAL WASH. HOUSE (SEED STRATIFICATION BLDG.)

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